

**THE ABSURDITY OF BEING AS REFLECTED IN FRANZ KAFKA'S THE  
METAMORPHOSIS NOVELLA (1915):  
AN EXISTENTIALISM APPROACH.**



**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
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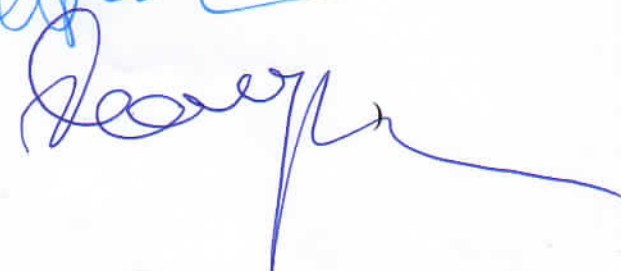
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Herewith, I declare that in this publication article, there is no such thing as plagiarism of the previous research study which has been raised to obtain bachelor degree, nor there are opinions or masterpiece which have been written or published by others, except those which are referred in the manuscript and mentioned in the research paper and bibliography. Therefore, if it is proved that there are some untrue statements in this declaration, I will hold full responsibility.

Surakarta, 22 July 2017



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**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penyebab terjadinya absurditas menjadi dalam diri Gregor Samsa yang menjadi tokoh utama dalam novella *The Metamorphosis* dan bagaimana konsekuensi yang timbul dari absurditas menjadi itu sendiri. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif kualitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan Teori Eksistensialisme milik Jean Paul Sartre. Berdasarkan analisis data, hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi absurditas menjadi dalam diri Gregor Samsa yang disebabkan oleh tujuh hal, yakni; ketidakberterimaan faktisitas, kebebasan yang dibatasi, adanya keyakinan buruk, tidak memiliki kesadaran reflektif yang baik, menjadi seseorang dengan keyakinan 'berada dalam dirinya', adanya orang lain yang memperburuk keadaan, serta absurditas itu sendiri dimana Gregor Samsa tidak dapat menentukan tujuan hidupnya. Selain itu konsekuensi atas absurditas menjadi dalam diri Gregor Samsa ditutup dengan kematian yang melambangkan kebebasan atas absurditasnya selama ini.

Kata kunci : Eksistensialisme, Jean Paul Sartre, Absurditas, The Metamorphosis

**ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to analyze the cause of absurdity of being in Gregor Samsa's life who becomes the main character in *The Metamorphosis* novella and the consequences of absurdity of being itself. The method used descriptive qualitative to analyze the data. This research used Existentialism theory by Jean Paul Sartre.

Based on the data analysis, the results of this research showed that there are some factors that influence absurdity of being in Gregor Samsa's life. The seven cause of absurdity of being are; unacceptable of facticity, freedom limitation, the presence of bad faith, did not have reflective consciousness, being to 'being-in-itself', some pressure from the other people, and the absurdity comes in Gregor Samsa's life which makes him cannot divide his goal of life. In addition, there is consequence of absurdity of being. Gregor Samsa's life ended by the death which represents the freedom of his absurdity of being.

Keywords : Existentialism, Jean Paul Sartre, Absurdity, The Metamorphosis

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Kafka writes *The Metamorphosis* to express his experience about the absurdity of being which contains anxiety and alienation issue. It is the first written story made by Kafka and it becomes important to many authors that concern in the same issue in many centuries. In *The Metamorphosis* (1912, p. 3) told, "One

morning, as Gregor Samsa was waking up from anxious dreams, he discovered that in bed he had been changed into a monstrous verminous bug”. It begins with shocking prolog, Kafka wants to invite the readers to get into an unrealistic life that is covered by the man who is transformed into a giant insect. He, Gregor Samsa, wakes up to find himself transformed into a monstrous verminous bug; he slowly dies, not only because of his family’s shame and its neglect of him but because of his own guilty despair.

It is the story of the man who transformed into an enormous creature and his life is changing. Kafka tries to tell the phenomenon of the absurdity of being. Sartre in Nugroho (2013) assumed when human is feeling absurd, shy, alienation, anxiety, and nauseated, so he has to be an existentialist. Those feelings include in human self when they make the relationship with another. Being the free man is free of feeling and senses everything which is making them alive. An absurdity is one of the representatives within the existence of human being. Sartre in Wibowo (2011) believed in a universe that does not care, there are no fundamental values to guide us, hence we are absolutely free to become anything we want to become and do anything we want to do. Actually, an absurdity has related to freedom, because the freedom makes some important decision on life. Some of the people are trapped by their unknown things about their freedom.

According to Magnis-Suseno (1987) freedom is differentiated from two parts; they are social freedom and existential freedom as defined that “existential freedom is the ability of human being to decide his act” (p. 26) as human, who has intellect, understands for choosing some alternatives to acting. That is the reason why human avoids the absurdity. We cannot separate the thinking of Sartre (1956) in his work *Being and Nothingness*, “Man cannot be sometimes slave and sometimes free; he is wholly and forever free or he is not free at all” (p. 441). It means freedom is one of the important characterizations which are glutinous in human’s existence. Hence, an absurdity of life has coherence with existentialism as philosophy.

Looking at the reason, the objective of the study is the main character named Gregor Samsa which is felt the absurdity of being and how the relation between these issues with existentialism approaches by Sartre. The researcher sees many

issues in *The Metamorphosis* novella that has already researched by another researcher. Certainly, it makes the researcher have the interest to research the novella entitled *The Metamorphosis* from the side of Existentialism proposed by Jean Paul Sartre. Particularly the researcher is interested in analyzing *The Absurdity of Being as Reflected in Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis Novella (1915): An Existentialism Approach*.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

The research belongs to qualitative research for analyzing *The Metamorphosis* novella written by Franz Kafka. There are two data sources which are needed to conduct this research. They are, the source of primary data is *The Metamorphosis* (1915) and the secondary data source are taken from other resources which related to the research as websites, journals, book of philosophy, and etc. The technique of data collection uses two technique, they are: note taking and library research. In analyzing the data, the researcher applied a descriptive qualitative analysis. The first step is finding aspects absurdity of being that is raised in the novella. The second step is collecting the addition information that related with the issue. The next steps are identified, classify, analyze, and interpret the phenomena and find out the relation with an epistemology of conceptual existentialism by Jean Paul Sartre.

## **3. RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

In *the metamorphosis* novel, Gregor Samsa as a traveling salesman wakes up in the morning and finds himself transformed into a monstrous verminous bug. This story tells the personal transformation of life and the change is not accepted by people around him.

Beginning with Gregor Samsa's transformation, all of his life is changed. He knows the transformation is not changed by him, so he starts to receive the facticity of his self-being. The family and manager know about Gregor's condition and do not want to receive the reality of Gregor's life. He is fired by his manager because he cannot work with his 'new body'. His family starts to change their attitude to him.

They start to not care about him and ignore him. All of his needed begins to decrease. It makes him so sad. In another moment, his freedom starts to be limited by his family and the other as his father make abandon to him into his room. His sister, the girl who care with his needed as the meal, is ignored him with uncaring the food that she is given to him. And his mother is afraid with his appearance, so she is seldom to look his son. His freedom is limited by his family and the other, it is proven from he has the bad faith about himself and it is influenced his consciousness and becomes being-in-itself. In addition, the other's bad looking makes him fallen down. It presents the alienation, anxiety, nothingness, and etc. Finally, he chooses to die when he cannot define himself and cannot arrange his life's goal.

The absurdity appears in some of the evidence such as Gregor's family and the other cannot the phenomenon that is happened in Gregor's body self. They cannot accept the transformation which Gregor's facticity is not hoped too. They start to limit Gregor's freedom to do something, it makes Gregor cannot to be free as human as usually. He is shackled in his room because of his condition and loose all of what he is gotten. The main of factors that make Gregor's absurdity of being are the first is the anxiety of his family's foresight because he always thinks hard about the problem that his family is faced and his occupation that solve the problem. The second one is the alienation that comes in his life, he is a member of the family but he is ignored by someone who gets his struggle. And the last one is the freedom which is limited and shackled by his family and all of the things that make the family happy.

The stage of Gregor's feeling absurdity of being is related to the concept of existentialism by Jean Paul Sartre. Gregor experiences the anxiety because he cannot accept the fact of his transformation and lost all of the things. It is influenced by his consciousness that is to be a non-reflective. He cannot define himself and cannot keep his existence. The alienation comes from the bad faith which is presents from an inability to make a meaning of himself and he choose to let the anxiety comes without to do something better. This situation is more serious with the bad looking and opinion by the other who is defined himself and make him into an object. The last stage is about the freedom which is limited by other people and it makes him into being-in-itself which feels over with his existence.



The consequences appear in Gregor's self-awareness; he looks so sad and disappointed with all of the things that he does. He feels so alienated and ignored by his family. He cannot be free although in his own home. So, he feels so desperate because of the bad response and uncaring action of people around him. The death is the imaginary for his absurdity of being. He imagines the death can receive him better with his condition.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In whole of Gregor Samsa's life, he experiences all of the factors that make him into absurdity of being. Starting from his transformation and one by one of the factors comes in his life. Gregor Samsa gets absurd because he cannot handle himself to survive with that condition. He lets the life to kill him.

"Would you love son, no matter what?" is the one of slogan in the poster design about *The Metamorphosis* movie. It represents the novella that is created by Franz Kafka. Kafka wants to say with Gregor as the main character who is transformed into something that he does not hope. The absurdity of being begins from his transformation. His facticity is not accepted by his family and the other. Gregor is condemned to be free because he cannot do something with his new condition, he just alive as he can. He has a bad faith because the non-reflective consciousness that makes him cannot define his existence. He becomes being-in-itself because his condition that makes him to impossible for doing as being-for-itself. He feels as a stranger and alienates in his home, his family.

The consequence of his existence is the death that makes him be free. When he cannot make a deal with that condition, the bad faith always comes in his mind and he cannot decide the good things. Until he has to give up with his condition and celebrate his freedom with the death. Gregor Samsa is the man who useless passion because his transformation is changed all of his life and abolish his struggle for his family foresight.

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